

# Suzy's World

## Allergies - What is an allergic reaction?

### Fact

- When someone has an allergic reaction to something their body might start to itch, or swell, they might get a rash, or start to cough or sneeze, their eyes might water or they might have trouble breathing.
- Allergy occurs when the person's body over reacts to something that is normally harmless like eggs, nuts, dust or pollen
- When the person's body over reacts their immune system produces a special kind of antibody called IgE and releases chemicals called histamines into their body to fight off the thing they're allergic.
- The histamines cause the symptoms like itching, coughing and sneezing.



### Do you know

- Some people are allergic to things like milk, cheese, bread, butter, flour, nuts, seafood, ice cream, dust, wasp stings, eggs, animals.
- Some people's allergies are so bad that they need to carry special medicine with them in case they have a really bad reaction called an anaphylactic (ana-fill-ak-tick) reaction.
- There's an organisation called Allergy New Zealand that has lots of information and offers support to allergy sufferers and their families.
- The best way to prevent an allergic reaction is to stay away from the thing that gives you an allergy.

### Experiments you can do

Find out if anyone in your family has an allergic reaction.

Find out what they are allergic to and how their body reacts.

Find out what they need to do when they have an allergic reaction to something and how you can help them. Then help them by keeping an eye out for the things that they are allergic to so they can stay away from them.



### Other Investigations

Scientists aren't too sure why people become allergic to things, but they keep investigating to see if they can find out.

Why don't you become a food allergy detective and have a look at the labels of the different foods that you eat. What is in that food? Manufacturers use lots of different chemicals to make the food more colourful, more taste and make it last longer. What

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do you think those chemicals are doing to your body? What kinds of food do you think are best for your body?

## **Jokes**

A peanut sat on a railroad track,  
His heart was all a flutter,  
A train came racing down the track,  
Toot, toot - peanut butter!  
From Kelsey Moore

